

RAT-FUCKER RASHOMON: ACCESSING HOLLYWOOD COVER- UPS OF THE RUSSIAN ATTRIBUTION

The Mueller Report has a section that purports to address whether Trump's team timed the Podesta email release to drop in such a way as to drown out the Access Hollywood video. After explaining that the stolen emails came out less than an hour after the video, the Mueller Report explains,

The Office investigated whether Roger Stone played any role in WikiLeaks's dissemination of the Podesta emails at that time.

The very next sentence, however, talks only about Jerome Corsi, suggesting that the investigation into this question lived and died (a maudlin death) with Corsi's conflicting testimony.

During his first September 2018 interview, Corsi stated that he had refused Stone's July 25, 2016 request to contact Assange, and that had been the last time they had talked about contacting Assange.

The Mueller Report spends three different paragraphs discussing not Roger Stone's role, but Jerome Corsi's shifting explanations on the topic of whether Corsi (but not Stone) had succeeded in getting the Podesta emails released on October 7.

Here's a sample of that Abbot and Costello routine plopped right in the middle of the Mueller Report:

Corsi gave conflicting accounts of what happened after Stone purportedly informed him about the video. Initially, Corsi told investigators that he had instructed Stone to have WikiLeaks release information to counteract the expected reaction to the video's release, and that Stone said that was a good idea and would get it done. Later during the same interview, Corsi stated that Stone had told Corsi to have WikiLeaks drop the Podesta emails immediately, and Corsi told Stone he would do it.

This passage relegates the phone records that – the affidavits make clear – *had* constituted a key part of this prong of the investigation to a footnote, and to add to the comedy routine, even cites a Chuck Ross story that Mueller's team knew (because they proved as much at trial) aired transparent Stone lies in order to incorporate a Stone denial regarding October 7.

249 Chuck Ross, *Jerome Corsi Testified That Roger Stone Sought WikiLeaks' Help To Rebut 'Access Hollywood' Tape*, Daily Caller (Nov. 27, 2018) (quoting Stone as claiming that he did not have knowledge of the tape until its publication).

This makes a second time that Ross proved to be a really useful idiot to the Mueller team.

Having laid out how unreliable Corsi is and never directly revealing what they knew about Stone's actions, the Mueller Report then answers a different question than the one that frames the section, "whether Roger Stone played any role in WikiLeaks's dissemination of the Podesta emails at that time." Instead, it answers whether Corsi's claims to have gotten the early release were credible. They weren't:

The Office investigated Corsi's allegations about the events of October

7, 2016 but found little corroboration for his allegations about the day.

The Mueller Report, then, substitutes a comedy routine about Jerome Corsi for a sober discussion revealing what the investigation into this question really examined and actually concluded.

The SSCI Report provides a more nuanced discussion of this question, incorporating some, but not all, of the phone records that investigators were interested in, as well as presumed Stone communications with Trump, book-ending the release, and Corsi's boasts after the fact that first gave investigators reason to pursue this question.

(U) WikiLeaks did not release anything on October 6. Nevertheless, on October 6, Stone tweeted: "Julian Assange will deliver a devastating expose on Hillary at a time of his choosing. I stand by my prediction. #handcuffs4hillary."¹⁶⁶¹ Stone and Credico had five additional calls that day.¹⁶⁶²

(U) On the afternoon of October 6, Stone received a call from Keith Schiller's number. Stone returned the call about 20 minutes later, and spoke—almost certainly to Trump—for six minutes. ¹⁶⁶³ The substance of that conversation is not known to the Committee. However, at the time, Stone was focused on the potential for a WikiLeaks release, the Campaign was following WikiLeaks's announcements, and Trump's prior call with Stone on September 29, also using Schiller's phone, related to a WikiLeaks release. Given these facts, it appears quite likely that Stone and Trump spoke about WikiLeaks.

(U) At approximately 4 p.m. on October 7, The Washington Post released the Access Hollywood tape.¹⁶⁶⁴ Witnesses

involved in Trump's debate preparation recalled that the team first heard of the tape about an hour prior to its public release. 1665 According to Jerome Corsi, however, news of the release also made its way to Roger Stone.1666 Corsi and Stone spoke twice that day at length: once at 1:42 p.m. for 18 minutes, and once at 2:18 p.m. for 21 minutes. 1667 Corsi recalled learning from Stone that the Access Hollywood tape would be coming out, and that Stone "[w]anted the Podesta stuff to balance the news cycle" either "right then or at least coincident."1668 According to Corsi, Stone also told him to have WikiLeaks "drop the Podesta emails immediately."1669

(U) When the tape later became public, Corsi claimed that he was not surprised by the graphic language because he had already heard it. 1670 Corsi recalled previewing the Access Hollywood tape with conference call participants during one or two calls that day: a WorldNetDaily staff call at 1:08 p.m., or a 2 p.m. call involving Total Banking Solutions that included Malloch. 1671 Corsi remembered telling conference participants that the tape was a problem and to contact Assange. 1672 Corsi then "watched all day to see what Assange would do," and when the Podesta emails were released, he thought to himself that Malloch "had finally got to Assange."1673 However, Corsi later told investigators that he did not call Malloch or Stone after the WikiLeaks release to convey this reaction because, in contradiction to his earlier statements, he was "doubtful" that Malloch had succeeded. 1674

(U) Corsi also claimed that he tweeted publicly at WikiLeaks in order to get them to release documents, but no such

tweets could be located. 1675 The SCO was unable to identify any conference call participants who recalled getting non-public information about the tape from Corsi that day; the Committee did not seek to confirm those findings. 1676

(U) At approximately 4:32 p.m. on October 7—approximately 32 minutes after the release of the Access Hollywood tape—WikiLeaks released 2,050 emails that the GRU had stolen from John Podesta, repeatedly announcing the leak on Twitter and linking to a searchable archive of the documents. 1677

[snip]

On October 8, Stone messaged Corsi: “Lunch postponed – have to go see T,” referring to Trump. 1681

(U) Corsi said that after the October 7 WikiLeaks release, he and Stone agreed that they deserved credit and that “Trump should reward us.”¹⁶⁸² However, Corsi said that Stone was concerned about having advance information about the Podesta release, and that Stone recruited Corsi to make sure no one knew Stone had advance knowledge of that information. After the October 7 release, Corsi claimed that Stone directed him to delete emails relating to the Podesta information.¹⁶⁸³

But a later affidavit – one that was sealed through Stone’s prosecution and therefore something that the Mueller Report would avoid mentioning – reveals that someone Charles Ortel introduced Stone to in August 2016 – I call the person R because incomplete redactions show his or her last name ends in “r” – also had close communication with Stone on the day of the Access Hollywood video drop. Combined and with one key addition, the timeline for that day (so without the probable Trump book-ends the day

before and the day after) looks this way [my emphasis]:

11:27 AM, CORSI placed a call to STONE which STONE did not answer.

11:53AM, STONE received a phone call from the Washington Post. The call lasted approximately twenty minutes.

12:33PM, R calls Stone. The call lasted approximately seven minutes.

1:42PM, STONE called CORSI and the two spoke for approximately seventeen minutes.

2:18PM, CORSI called STONE and the two spoke for approximately twenty minutes.

2:38PM, R calls Stone. That call lasted approximately one minute.

3:32PM, DHS releases **Joint Statement** attributing election interference to and tying WikiLeaks and the GRU cut-outs to Russia.

3:32PM, R FaceTimes Stone. They don't connect.

4:00PM, the Washington Post published a story regarding the Access Hollywood tape.

4:32PM, WikiLeaks tweets out its first release of emails hacked from John Podesta that focused primarily on materials related to the Clinton Foundation. On or about August 2, 2016, when CORSI emailed STONE on Target Account 1, he wrote "I expect that much of next dump focus, setting stage for Foundation debacle."

6:27PM, Ortel sends STONE an email titled, "WikiLeaks – The Podesta Emails" with a link to the newly-released Podesta emails. Approximately ten minutes later, STONE forwarded message to CORSI at Target Account 1 without

comment. STONE does not appear to have forwarded the email to any other individual.

“R” may be associated with the Peter Smith effort to find Hillary’s deleted emails. Later affidavits reveal that Stone first obtained ProtonMail (along with Signal) the day he first spoke with this person; other materials show that everyone involved in the Smith effort was required to use ProtonMail.

That said, “R” may be just another person with some kind of tie to WikiLeaks. Another part of this affidavit describes Stone and “R” meeting on October 10, a meeting at which, Stone later seemed to suggest, he met with his Assange source; the affidavit suggests that “R” might fit Stone’s later description of a male who traveled back and forth from the UK. That is, this person, like Credico, may be just another cover story for his true contact.

Including “R’s” contacts with Stone into the timeline, however, suggests another possible reason to explain the timing of the WikiLeaks release. It appears that at the moment DHS dropped what was – at the time – an unprecedented statement attributing the election hacking to the Russian Government and describing, “recent disclosures of alleged hacked e-mails on sites like DCLeaks.com and WikiLeaks and by the Guccifer 2.0 online persona [to be] consistent with the methods and motivations of Russian-directed efforts,” “R” tried unsuccessfully to contact Stone via FaceTime.

That presents another possible explanation for the timing, one ignored by many discussing the events of October 7, including the SSCI Report (though I raised it in 2017): that WikiLeaks released the Podesta emails to drown out the attribution announcement. Not only might advance notice of that DHS/ODNI statement be more readily accessible to people in Trump’s orbit (perhaps via Gang of Eight members Devin Nunes

or Richard Burr, who were national security advisors to the campaign), but both Russia and WikiLeaks would have a direct stake in swamping the Joint attribution tying WikiLeaks and the stolen emails to Russia.

For what it's worth, given what I know about both public and private instances of entities playing both sides in this affair, I wouldn't rule out Russia orchestrating the Access Hollywood leak, either, both to make Trump more desperate and to give the Podesta drop more value as a result.

That doesn't prove that Stone – with or without Corsi – had any influence on the timing. But a passage of the "R" affidavit repeats a claim that was redacted (to protect an ongoing investigation) earlier in the affidavit. Someone – probably Ted Malloch, whose publicly reported testimony this matches – testified that Corsi claimed credit for the timing in January 2017.

As noted above [redacted] told investigators that in January 2017, CORSI told him that he (CORSI) and STONE were involved in and were aware of the timing and content of the WikiLeaks releases in advance, including the fact that the emails belonged to John Podesta, and CORSI implied, in sum and substance, that STONE was involved in the release of the Podesta emails by WikiLeaks.

None of that confirms anything about the granularity with which Stone affected the timing of the release on October 7. But it does show that, at the time the Mueller team was writing their report and, given both the "R" affidavit redactions and more recent ones, to this day, investigators were and are hiding some of the details they learned about what happened on that day.

Those are the kind of gaps that make narrative analysis interesting.

The movie Rashomon demonstrated that any given narrative tells just one version of events, but that by listening to all available narratives, you might identify gaps and biases that get you closer to the truth.

I'm hoping that principle works even for squalid stories like the investigation into Roger Stone's cheating in the 2016 election. This series will examine the differences between four stories about Roger Stone's actions in 2016:

- *The Mueller Report*
- *The Stone prosecution*
- *The SSCI Report*
- *The affidavits from the investigation*

As I noted in the introductory post (which lays out how I generally understand the story each tells), each story has real gaps in one or more of these areas:

- *While the Mueller Report made it clear Trump's pardon dangles to keep details of his conversations with Roger Stone secret amounted to obstruction, it didn't tell just just how many conversations they had*
- *Rather than telling us whether, how, and why Roger Stone optimized the release of John Podesta's emails on October 7, 2016, the Mueller Report instead gave us Jerome Corsi slapstick*
- *Just one story presents the significant amounts of*

evidence suggesting that on August 14, 2016, when he started a file called "Podesta," Jerome Corsi had or knew the contents of the Podesta files that would become public on October 11, 2016

- *The later stories focus on Podesta, rather than the evidence that Stone learned of the hack-and-leak while the burglary was still ongoing*
- *Stone pitched both Manafort and Bannon on a way to win ugly—but none of the Stone stories tell us what that was*
- *Trolling for Russia*
- *The "highest levels of government" attempt to shut down an investigation into Julian Assange*
- *Guccifer 2.0 as go-between*

My hope is that by identifying these gaps and unpacking what they might say about the choices made in crafting each of these stories, we can get a better understanding of what actually happened – both in 2016 and in the investigations. The gaps will serve as a framework for this series.